

Rhode Island
Department of Human Services

ORS_{ervices}

Office of Rehabilitation Services
1999
Annual Report



Lincoln Almond,
Governor



Christine C. Ferguson,
Director



1999 – A Year of Accomplishment

The Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services is pleased to present its Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1999.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is a required partner in the Rhode Island One-Stop Service Delivery System established under the Workforce Investment Act. This new delivery system called netWORKri (where people and jobs connect) streamlines access to numerous training and other human resource services, activities and programs. This new system will simplify and expand access to services for individuals with disabilities and for employers.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program increases revenue at all levels of government and decreases the burden of income maintenance programs. As persons with disabilities achieve an employment outcome, they become tax-paying citizens and more than pay back the cost of the program.

The accomplishments outlined in this annual report reflect favorably on the efforts of the staff who by their hard work and commitment have continued a long tradition of serving Rhode Islanders with disabilities.

We are also indebted to the Rhode Island State Rehabilitation Council for their partnership and help in maximizing the potential of persons with disabilities through meaningful employment.

Raymond A. Carroll, Administrator

Program Highlights – Federal Fiscal Year 1999

- ◆ 1,801 Rhode Islanders applied for vocational rehabilitation service.
- ◆ 6,013 persons with disabilities were provided vocational rehabilitation, training and employment services.
- ◆ 540 individuals with disabilities were successfully employed.
- ◆ 99% of individuals successfully employed have significant disabilities.
- ◆ 1,265 young adults (14 to 21) received transition services through the VR program.
- ◆ Total increase in annual income for consumers rehabilitated is \$4,185,844.
- ◆ For every dollar spent on vocational rehabilitation. A consumer earns \$11.00 in increased taxable earnings.
- ◆ The cost of vocational rehabilitation is paid back in two to four years.
- ◆ Disability Determination Services processed 13,708 Social Security and Supplemental Income Disability claims for Rhode Islanders.
- ◆ \$317 million Federal dollars are paid to 49,351 Rhode Islanders through Social Security Disability benefits each year.
- ◆ Business Enterprise Program at Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired supports 22 blind vending facilities which increased sales by 4.3% to \$1.5 million.

MISSION STATEMENT

To empower individuals with disabilities to choose, prepare for, obtain and maintain employment, economic self sufficiency, independence and integration into society.

WHO WE ARE

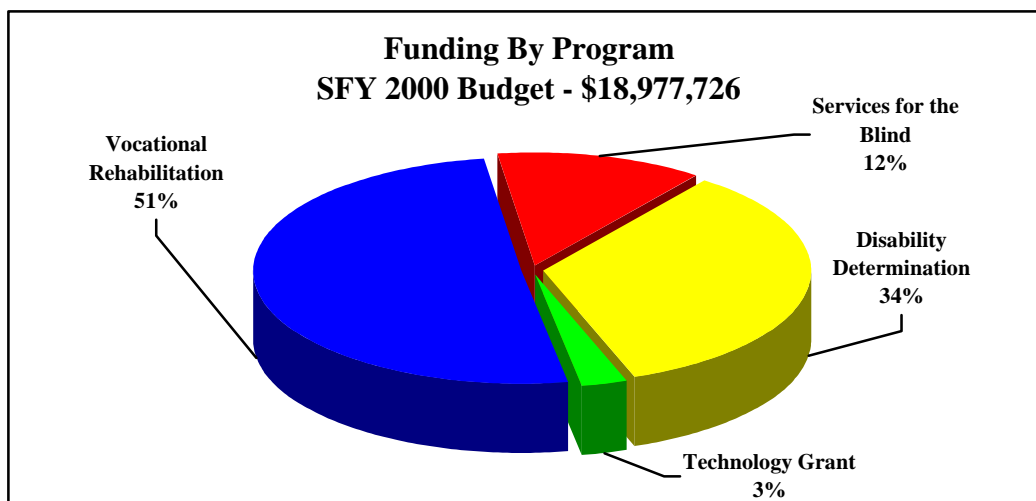
To accomplish its mission, the Office of Rehabilitation Services provides a comprehensive program of rehabilitation, social and independent living services to eligible Rhode Island residents who have a disability and apply for services.

Vocational Rehabilitation

The VR program assists individuals who have a disability that is a substantial impediment to employment to achieve employment outcomes.

Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired

A variety of training and adjustment services for individuals who are blind or have significant visual impairments is offered through SBVI.



Disability Determination Services

DDS is a state-administered federal program that develops, adjudicates, and processes disability claims of RI residents for Social Security disability benefits (SSDI, SSI).

Assistive Technology Access Partnership (ATAP)

The goal of the RI ATAP project is to remove barriers and increase access to assistive technology devices and services for individuals with disabilities.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

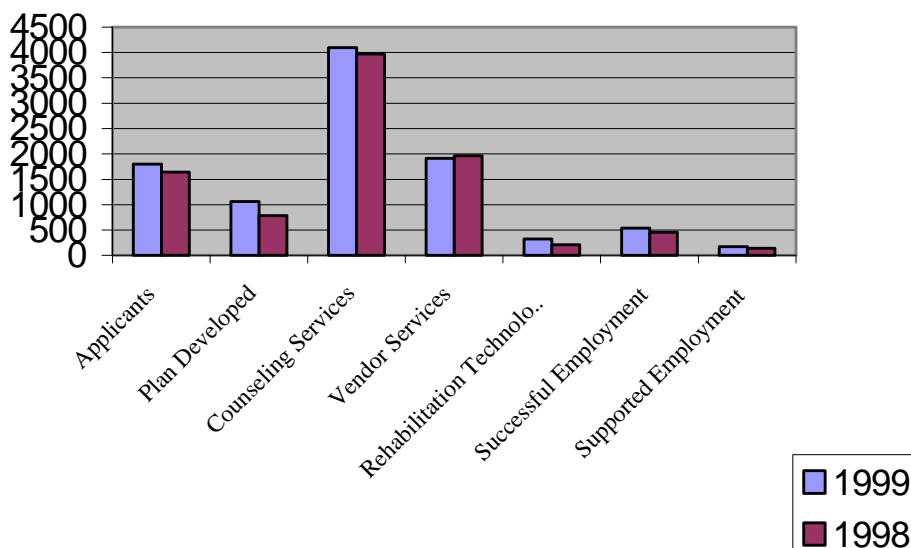
WHAT WE DO

The Vocational Rehabilitation process consists of assisting an individual with a disability to assess his/her potential and to identify, coordinate and provide services needed to realize the potential to help find employment. The individual and Rehabilitation Counselor work together to develop an Employment Plan and carry it through.

Some specific services:

- ♦ Counseling and guidance
- ♦ School-to-career transition planning
- ♦ Rehabilitation technology/assistive technology services
- ♦ Job training and job supports
- ♦ Job seeking skills
- ♦ Job development and placement services
- ♦ Post-employment services

6,013 Individuals with Disabilities Were Provided with Vocational Rehabilitation Services in 1999 (5,614 in 1998)



APPLICATION



PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT



ELIGIBILITY



COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT



EMPLOYMENT PLAN



SERVICES TO EMPLOYMENT



EMPLOYMENT & JOB SUPPORTS

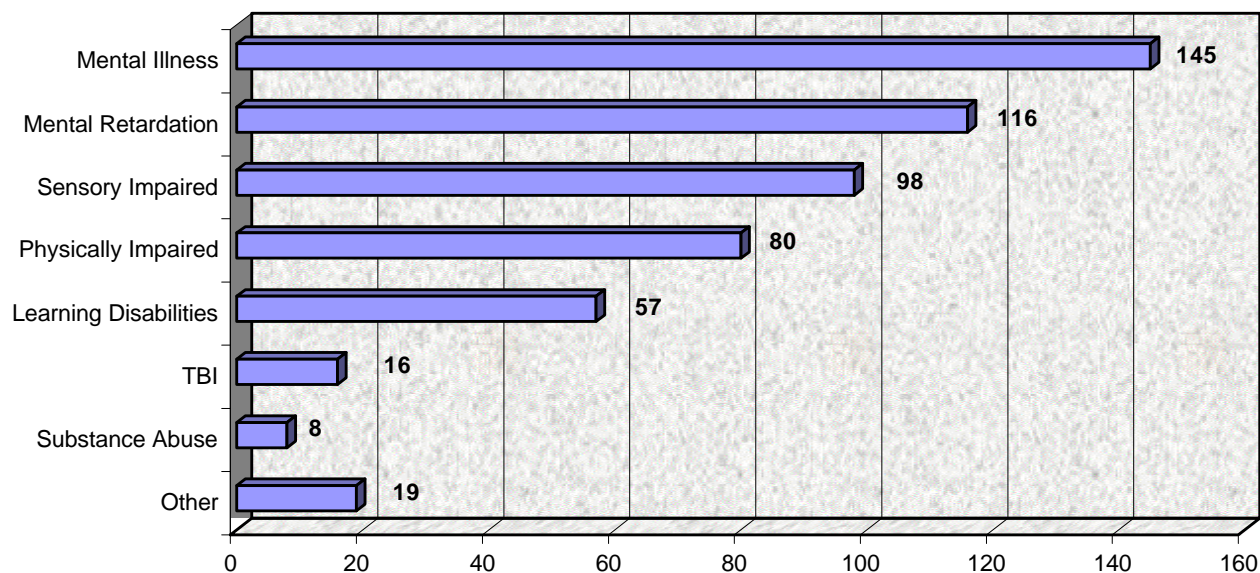


SUCCESSFUL REHABILITATION, CASE CLOSURE

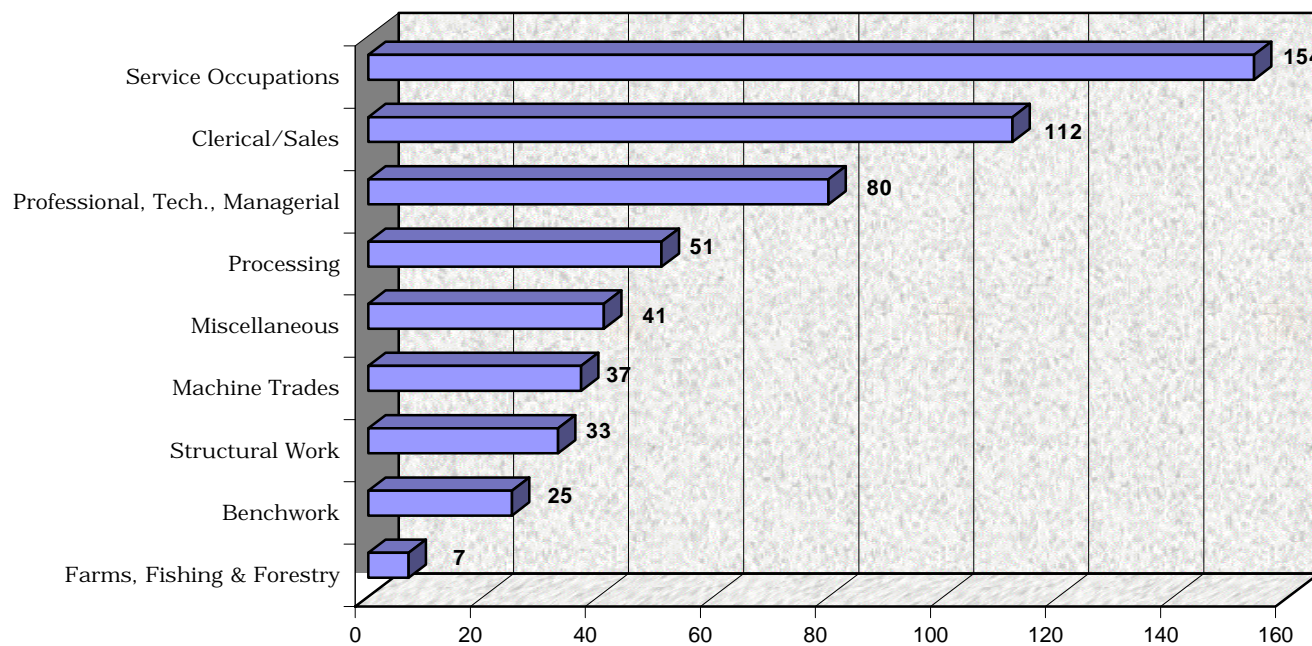


POST-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, IF NEEDED

**Primary Disability of 540 Individuals
Successfully Employed
10/1/98 - 9/30/99**



**Occupations at Closure for 540
Individuals Successfully Employed
10/1/98 - 9/30/99**



SERVICES FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Vocational Rehabilitation Unit: Provided comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services to 66 individuals with significant visual impairments and continued needed services to 335 individuals with significant visual impairments, enabling them to achieve their vocational goals such as rehabilitation engineer, graphics designer, janitor, etc. An information packet was developed regarding hiring issues and tax incentives for employers.

Business Enterprises Program: Provided challenging employment opportunities at 22 locations throughout Rhode Island for persons who are legally blind. The program provides site development, training, on-going support and technical consultation to insure successful outcomes for those served.

Independent Living for Older Blind Program: Project SPIRIT (Seniors Pursuing Individual Rehabilitation Independence Training) provided services to 635 elderly blind individuals. Direct services of case management, rehabilitation teaching in the activities of daily living, mobility instructions, low vision aids, hearing aids and adaptive equipment were provided.

Social Service Unit: Provided comprehensive social services, including case management, provision of low-vision evaluations, information & referral, and service coordination of direct agency services and ancillary community services, to 257 infants, toddlers and children, and 620 blind and visually impaired individuals who are elderly or have no vocational interest. Coordinated a summer camp program for 60 students who are blind, visually impaired and/or multi-handicapped.

DISABILITY DETERMINATION SERVICES

- ♦ The Disability Determination Services successfully processed a total of 13,708 claims in FY 1999.
- ♦ 3,324, or 24% of the total, were Continuing Disability Reviews reflecting a 15% increase in this workload category from FY 1998.
- ♦ The production per work year (PPWY) efficiency rate (a key performance indicator) was 281 which compared favorably with the national average of 264. The six state Boston Region was ranked first among the ten regions nationally in this performance category.
- ♦ The overall combined accuracy rate improved to 95.6 from 93.5% in FY 1998 and helped place the Boston Region first among the ten regions nationally.
- ♦ The agency received a Social Security Administration's Superior Public Service Award on May 6, 1999 which was presented by the Regional Commissioner for Social Security Administration.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACCESS PARTNERSHIP

The Assistive Technology Access Partnership (ATAP) is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and administered by the DHS/ORS. The project goal is to remove barriers and improve access to assistive technology for Rhode Islanders with disabilities. Funding priorities are: public awareness, outreach, interagency coordination, and technical assistance & training related to assistive technology.

In 1999:

- ♦ ATAP provided training to 7,370 people.
- ♦ The ATAP Home Page (www.atap.state.ri.us) was revised and received 500 hits in the first several months.
- ♦ ATAP's Information and Referral (one-contact system) and partners responded to inquiries from 4,100 individuals.
- ♦ **Interagency coordination has been accomplished in the following areas:** ATAP, Department of Health, American Medical Association, and Brown University trained 15 Physicians and Health Care Providers who agreed to present information to their peers. ATAP, the RI Department of Education and the RI Parent Information Network trained 40 parent trainers and IEP Fellows. ATAP assisted the RI Department of Labor and Training to increase access to the One-Stop Career Centers for individuals with disabilities through assistive technology awareness and devices. ATAP worked with PARI Independent Living Center and RI DEM (RI Resource Recovery Corporation) to implement an efficient system of linkage between AT users and usable recycled equipment.

ADVISORY COUNCIL PARTNERS

State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) - Assists ORS to develop the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Plan and evaluates the effectiveness of the VR program.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) - Monitors, reviews and evaluates the implementation of the State Plan for Independent Living.

R. I. State Committee of Blind Vendors - Comprised of vendors who are blind and operate facilities throughout RI while actively participating in the development of policies governing the duties, promotion and due process rights of the vendors.

Governor's Advisory Council for the Blind and Visually Impaired - Provides advice and input regarding policy, service provisions, rules and regulations for Rhode Islanders who are blind or visually impaired.

R. I. Council on Assistive Technology (RICAT) - The advisory body to the ATAP project which involves individuals with disabilities in a significant way in the development of technology-related assistance programs, and ensures the provision of assistive technology for individuals with disabilities.

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

Learning Disabilities Project – Provides specialized vocational rehabilitation services for Family Independence Program (FIP) beneficiaries with learning disabilities.

Transition Services – Through the cooperative program funded through the RI Department of Education and DHS/ORS students with disabilities were provided a wide range of vocational assessment and career planning services through 5 regional transition centers.

One-Stop Career System – Four One-Stop Career Centers, called netWORKri, located in Providence, Pawtucket, Warren and Wakefield are open and staffed by ORS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. Increased resources for individuals with disabilities related to employment are available.

CONTACTS

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A special thank you to: ORS Staff Roberta Accetturo, Sharon DiPinto, and Stephanie DeBonis who worked with administration to develop and edit this report.